



DOUGLAS A. DUCEY
GOVERNOR

STATE OF ARIZONA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

EXECUTIVE OFFICE

June 29, 2022

The Honorable Katie Hobbs
Secretary of State
1700 W. Washington, 7th Floor
Phoenix, AZ 85007

RE: House Bill 2274 appropriation; stipend; kinship foster care

Dear Secretary Hobbs,

Today I signed H.B. 2274 to bring much needed support to kinship families in Arizona — especially those grandparents who have stepped up to raise their grandchildren when the parents were unable to safely do so. For too long, these grandparents have been given a dramatically lower level of support than foster parents — but that is about to end. I called for this important reform in my State of the State Address in January, and I am very pleased to sign it into law today.

With this bill, kinship stipends will immediately increase from \$75 a month to \$300 a month. But this bill cannot be looked at in isolation. It pairs with an equally important bill I signed earlier in session which directs the Arizona Department of Child Safety (DCS) to create a swift pathway to licensure for kin, which for those who choose to be licensed will then bring them to full parity in terms of financial support as foster care providers.

In addition to this bill, the budget I signed includes:

- Ongoing support for our kinship and foster families;
- A doubling of the monthly independent living stipend for young adults who age out of the foster care system and voluntarily participate the program,
- \$10 million to create a Foster Youth Transitional Housing program on the campus of the East Valley Institute of Technology;

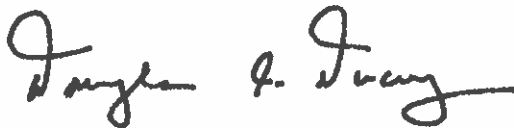
- Increased funding for Arizona Healthy Families Program to help keep children safely in their homes; and
- An expansion of the Qualified Foster Care Tax Credit to include programs that help youth transitioning out of foster care. The credit is also indexed to inflation to ensure that its value is not diminished each year.

Since my first day in office, ensuring Arizona children in DCS care have the support they need has been a priority. We worked with leaders like Directors Greg McKay and Mike Faust to eliminate the backlog of cases, safely reduce the number of children in care, and make DCS a model for other states to look to. At the same time, we have worked to increase support for the children in care through improved transition programs and innovative partnerships, like Grand Canyon University's Fostering Futures program. And today, the state is finally on a firm financial footing that allows us to make this large investment in helping our kinship care providers.

I would like to thank Representative Jeff Weninger for sponsoring this bill, and for all the work he has done to protect vulnerable children and families throughout his years in the legislature.

Lastly, let me say we appreciate and thank all those who care for children in DCS care: the kinship families, foster families, non-profits organizations providing support, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), and case workers. These children deserve all the support we can give them.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Douglas A. Ducey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Douglas" being more prominent and the last name "Ducey" following in a similar style.

Douglas A. Ducey
Governor
State of Arizona

cc: The Honorable Karen Fann
The Honorable Rusty Bowers
The Senate Secretary
The House Clerk
AZ News Service